



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 1, 2025
2:00 p.m.

4481 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Board Present: Brad Eisenhart, President
Mike Hayden, Vice President (arrived 2:20 p.m.)
Matt Freije, Secretary
Gary Emsweller
Paul Miner
Vicky Byarley

Board Absent: Jeff Pell

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent
Jim Holtsclaw, Park Manager
Patty Seymour, Administrative Assistant

Guests: None

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

Freije moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Miner, the motion passed unanimously.

A-2. Approval of Minutes of July 2nd Park Board Meeting

Freije moved to approve the minutes of the July 2nd Park Board meeting; seconded by Miner, the motion passed unanimously.

A-3. Approval of Minutes of September 3rd Park Board Meeting

Miner moved to approve the minutes of the September 3rd Park Board meeting; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

None

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. Reservable Pavilion Fees

After conducting some local research and assessing the demand from park staff to prepare for daily reservations, Lemley proposed the following pavilion reservation fee increases to the Park Board for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park:

- Bluegill Pavilion (capacity of 100 people): \$100 per day
- Firefly Pavilion (capacity of 48 people): \$80 per day

The reservation fee for Bluegill Pavilion is \$75 per day, and for Firefly Pavilion, it's \$50 per day. After some discussion, the Park Board approved Lemley's proposal. **Miner moved to approve increasing the reservation fees for both pavilions as proposed by Lemley and to revisit the topic annually; seconded by Byarley; motion passed unanimously.**

C-2. 2026 Park Board Meeting Schedule

Lemley proposed a tentative schedule to the Park Board regarding the 2026 monthly meeting schedule. The proposed schedule follows the meeting dates and times from previous years. The Park Board discussed various topics related to the schedule and decided to keep the same dates and times as in prior years. **Hayden moved to approve the 2026 Park Board Meeting schedule as proposed; seconded by Emsweller; motion passed unanimously.**

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – L&WCF Grant Property Encumbrance

Lemley reported that he communicated the Park Board's approved and revised property encumbrance proposal, which is necessary to satisfy the National Park Service (NPS), before closing out the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) grant. During the last board meeting, the Park Board directed that both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Gibbs Park property be encumbered, following encouragement from the NPS. This encumbrance will exclude the 20 acres where the Gibbs homestead and house are located, the area designated for a future office, and the 22-acre field that houses the maintenance hub.

Both the NPS and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supported this proposal. Lemley reminded the Park Board that the encumbrance ensures the park property will remain designated as a park indefinitely. This means that neither County Officials nor the Park Board can make any changes to develop something other than a park amenity on the encumbered portions of the property. Additionally, any non-open-air facility development will require DNR approval.

After further discussion, **Miner moved to proceed with the encumbrance easement as recommended by HCP&R staff, which encompasses 112.25 acres, excluding the 20-acre Gibbs Homestead Parcel and the 22-acre field with the Maintenance Hub. The motion also granted Park Board President Eisenhart the authority to sign the necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Emsweller and passed unanimously.**

E. PROPERTY UPDATES

E-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley informed the Park Board that the final step in implementing the educational turtle enclosures at the nature center is the installation of three interpretive signs. EnviroSigns Interpretive Solutions is currently manufacturing these signs, which were designed by the Naturalist team. The entire project was funded through the Robert Wood Environmental Grant. The Park Board has requested to invite Carol Wood, the late Robert Wood's wife, to the nature center for photographs with her and the

completed exhibit once the signs are installed.

Lemley provided the Park Board with an update on upcoming programs that the naturalist staff will be offering in the coming weeks. This includes the Fall Colors Festival at McCloud Nature Park and the Fall-O-Ween Spooktacular event at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Lemley also summarized the popular events hosted by the Naturalists in the past month.

Lemley announced that he has authorized an agreement with Cummins Tree Service to remove or trim four large hazardous trees. He emphasized that this professional service is necessary because the hazardous trees are located around the nature center, Mill Cottage, and the gazebo in the park. The work will begin after the Fall Colors Festival.

Lemley reported that the newly implemented Private Program Guide has been used twice since the Park Board approved the program at the September Park Board meeting.

Lemley informed the Park Board that staff had discovered unauthorized campfires and a significant amount of trash along Big Walnut Creek. Park Manager Jim Holtsclaw promptly installed security cameras in the area and trained the naturalist and maintenance staff on how to collect data from the camera devices.

Stantec recently completed their final management session as part of the 2025 Arboretum Management agreement.

Lemley noted that the 2025 Prairie Maze has been very successful this year. The maze is shaped like the head of a Whitetail Buck.

Lemley provided positive comments toward the naturalist staff, noting their excellence in many areas this past year and their success in overcoming several challenges left over from previous leadership. Hannah Mossbarger, the newly hired naturalist assistant, was recently invited to return to Michigan to present her undergraduate senior project. Her project focused on hands-on field operations related to various nature topics, which she completed earlier this year.

As of Thursday, September 25th, TRAFx counters documented 1,606 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley informed the Park Board that he will be attending a luncheon meeting about the Greater Indy Trailways Project. Leadership from the Central Indiana Community Foundation will present an update on their efforts to expand the trails during this meeting.

Lemley reported that the Coatesville trailhead restrooms have been vandalized again. A large pile of paper towels was found, removed from the dispenser, and disposed of in the toilet, along with fecal matter, causing the toilet to clog. Byarley asked Lemley if he would consider installing air hand dryers in the restrooms instead of towel dispensers. Lemley responded that it could be a possibility, but he needed to check if it would be feasible with the current electrical supply.

Scott Chapman and friends hosted a rest stop at the Amo trailhead on Sunday, September 14th, as part of the Central Indiana Cycling's Gear Up Weekend Ride. Participants began in Plainfield, then traveled to Amo and afterward to Coatesville.

As of Thursday, September 25th, TRAFx counters documented 1,736 patrons visiting the Vandalia Trail this month.

E-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley updated the Park Board on the progress of the future Welcome Center and Administrative Office. He has been holding weekly meetings with Studio View Architects to discuss the project. On September 20th, they met with the Town of Avon Planning staff to review the detailed plan set and zoning requirements. Lemley expects to receive a guaranteed maximum price estimate for the construction and site development work soon. The Development Plan will be presented to the Avon Plan Commission on November 24th. For planning purposes, Lemley will request the Park Board's permission to solicit bid packets from Patterson Horth Construction Contractors during our next meeting. At the November 5th Park Board Meeting, the Board will decide if additional time is necessary for Patterson Horth to solicit bids. A decision will be made regarding whether to receive bids at the December 3rd Park Board Meeting. If everything proceeds as planned, Lemley anticipates making a recommendation for award at the Park Board Meeting on January 7, 2026.

Lemley informed the Park Board that Paul Weddle has been appointed as the new County Facilities Director. Lemley coordinated with Weddle to arrange housekeeping services for the temporary HCP&R Administrative Office, as well as for the newly installed restrooms at Gibbs Park. These housekeeping services will be funded from the Facilities budget for the remainder of the current budget cycle. Lemley expressed gratitude to Weddle for facilitating this arrangement. Additionally, Lemley received a quote from the cleaning contractors for the future Welcome Center & Administrative Office for budgetary planning purposes.

Lemley reported that the manufacturer of the recently installed CXT public restrooms will give a \$15,000 refund because they couldn't install the pipe chase plumbing within the facilities, as they lacked an Indiana-licensed plumber on their staff. This work was coordinated through John Hall Construction. The County Health Department approved the wastewater system earlier this month, but the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is still finalizing the permit close-out for the public water system. As a result, the water fountains remain inoperable at this time. Lemley noted that all water samples have come back as satisfactory.

The maintenance staff is making steady progress on the Bicentennial Tree Trail. The next step is to finalize the memorial benches for the major donors.

Seymour submitted a \$5,000 grant proposal to the Hendricks County Recycling District to purchase recycled plastic picnic tables for Gibbs Park. If approved, the tables will be installed on permanent concrete pads to serve as lasting picnic areas in the central part of the park.

Lemley informed the Park Board that they currently have three Eagle Scout projects underway for Gibbs Park. One involves constructing and installing 10 bluebird boxes, another may involve interpretive signs, and the last one pertains to owl boxes that have been installed along Walnut Walkway and Pollinator Path.

As of Thursday, September 25th, TRAFx counters documented 4,147 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that the 2026 Summer Fun Run Series schedule is finalized, with the series taking

place at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, McCloud Nature Park, and the Vandalia Trail, among other parks and trails within Hendricks County.

Lemley expressed gratitude to Byarley for her help in creating a video to promote the Grit Freedom Mobility Wheelchair Program. The video will be featured at the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) 2026 Picnic in the Parks event.

Lemley reported that the maintenance team is dedicating time and effort to refurbishing the cedar park signage at McCloud. The boards are starting to thin, and the lettering is becoming less visible. As a result, they have developed an in-house plan to replace all cedar park signage with high-density polyethylene (HDPE). Although the sign replacement process is lengthy and somewhat costly, it represents a long-term investment that will ultimately reduce or eliminate the need for regular refurbishments of the cedar signs. The in-house CNC machine will be utilized to complete the project, which is set to become a priority for the maintenance team this fall or winter. Ivie mentioned that two of the brass sign placards at Gibbs Park are in poor condition and will be replaced with similar signage made from HDPE material. He will coordinate this work with Holtsclaw.

Lemley reported that Ryann Hoffman applied for the Robert Wood Grant of \$5,121 to buy high-quality fishing supplies and additional gear for programming events.

F-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported that as they enter the final quarter of the 2025 budget cycle, it is necessary to transfer funds within the budget to compensate vendors for their services and products. Ivie highlighted the following fund transfers: a \$4,000 transfer from Attorney Fees to Professional Fees, a \$7,390 transfer from Machinery & Equipment to Other Park Improvements, and an \$884.50 transfer from Property Rental Fees to Repairs & Maintenance. Department leadership is maintaining close communication with one another, as they always do during the year-end budget cycle.

Ivie explained that they have just under \$14,000 remaining in the Land & Water Conservation Fund from the grant they received. However, this amount is designated for the engineering portion of the project, which has already been fully paid. Ivie added that they cannot use this money for any construction aspects of the project. Therefore, they must issue a refund to the Federal Government as required by the terms of the grant.

F-3. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

Eisenhart reported no new information from the Foundation at this time and reminded the Park Board that his term with the Foundation will expire at the end of the year.

ADJOURNMENT

Miner moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:17 p.m.; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the Gibbs Homestead located at 4481 Gibbs Road, Danville, IN 46122.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Freije, Secretary